

Seminar Agenda

Welcome

VBO Overview

About The Presenter

Seminar No. 3

Communicating in a Virtual Environment

Questions

Final Comments

9/20/2002

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Seminar Date: 9/24/2002

Greetings and welcome to Communicating in a Virtual Environment. Congratulations on your decision to explore the burgeoning industry of Virtual Business Ownership. Should you experience technical difficulties, please contact, Shawn Young, **LIFELines Technical Support** at (202) 433-6162 or via email: **young.shawn@hq.navy.mil**

This self-paced seminar was designed exclusively for **Low bandwidth users**. We recommend that you

1. Print all the slides in this seminar
2. Visit the VBO event calendar to verify live moderated chat dates and times.
3. Contact the VBO site manager by email to: **vparham@vsscyberoffice.com** to attend the Communicating in a Virtual Environment Moderated Chat. Once you've been granted permission to attend, an invitation will be emailed to you with a login password.

Note: VBO Moderated Chat Session starts promptly at 1330 EST. We recommend that you Print and Review slides and write down your questions in advance.



The VBO Initiative will deliver an interactive online environment where military spouses can learn and access business resources and experts. Using the latest technology, VBO will deliver (web-based) resources, information, and interactive collaboration through message boards, moderated chats and educational seminars relating to the topic of Virtual Business Ownership.

The purpose of the VBO Initiative is to assist Navy and Marine Corps spouses who are interested in establishing their own virtual businesses in cyberspace.

Description of Seminar Platforms:

Real Time Seminars - are live and conducted online in a web conferencing room. Participants are able to hear and interact with the presenter and subject matter experts live using their computers, Internet access, a microphone and speakers.

Self-paced Seminars - have been designed for both high bandwidth users (**DSL or higher**) and low bandwidth users (**dial-up 28.8 kbps or better**). Those who are not able to attend the live real time seminars are encouraged to view the self-paced versions. To access, logon to the VBO website, click on conference room and select "Seminar Info Page".

Communicating in a Virtual Environment



Oct 08, 02

Marketing your Virtual Company

Stay tuned for New Seminar Dates and Times

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We invite you to join us for all upcoming real time seminars. Take a moment to update your calendars. Visit **www.lifelines2000.org/vbo** for information about our new seminar series, dates, and times for 2003!

Communicating in a Virtual Environment

About The Presenter



*Victoria M. Parham, President & CTO
Virtual Support Services*

Victoria is an Army veteran and military spouse who has successfully established her own virtual business in cyberspace. Now living in Alaska, she works for all types of clients across the United States through the Internet, phone, fax, email and other telecommunication technologies.

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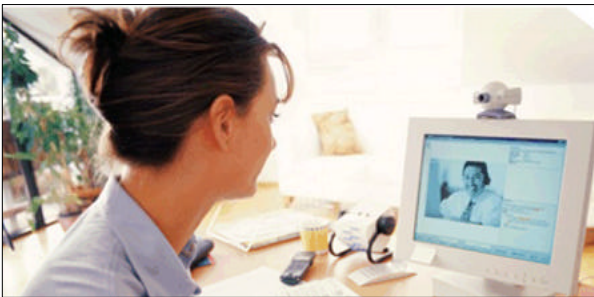
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In 1989, Parham left the Army to devote her energies to motherhood. What started out as a life of motherhood and being a military spouse soon turned into a pursuit of passion. Motivated by a passion to help people lead better lives, Parham began seeking for her purpose. One day while at work for a government agency in Savannah, GA, Parham discovered her purpose and decided she no longer wanted to be an employee but an entrepreneur. On April 5, 1994 she formed "Victoria's Secretarial Services" a brick and mortar company. Parham provided administrative support, resume cultivation and career counseling to active duty personnel and their family members and secretarial support to the local business community. Faced with another transition, Parham sold her company in 1995.

In January 1997, Parham launched her new virtual company, Virtual Support Services, (vsscyberoffice.com). This new virtual model would allow her to live the company's slogan "For The Way You Work TODAY, Working Virtually, Anytime ^ Anyplace. Today, Parham's company serves as a total outsourcing solution for companies around the world. She has served as a personal virtual assistant to high profile executives and celebrities worldwide.

Parham has been profiled in several major media outlets, Alaska Journal of Commerce, Black Enterprise Magazine, TechTV, Alaska Online Television, and most recently in the August 2002 issue of Home Business Magazine. An advocate for military quality of life issues Parham speaks to military spouses through message boards, articles, email, workshops and seminars on "Self Empowerment".

In November 2001, Parham was selected by the State of Alaska as a Top Forty Under 40 Business Leader in recognition of her commitment to professional excellence and business growth.

in a Virtual Environment

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COMMUNICATING IN A VIRTUAL ENVIRONMENT – What are you saying or not saying to your clients, suppliers, and/or industry colleagues?

Communicating effectively with your clients particularly when you are a VBO is key to building a successful virtual business. Communicating with your clients in a positive way makes your marketing, business development, and growth effortless.

Top 10 Communication Techniques

Listen – to what your clients are saying

Be Aggressive – ask questions, learn about your clients needs and customize your service or product to meet their needs

Smile – a genuine smile releases positive energy

Be available – not only do clients want your Ability but rely on your Availability

Perfect your marketing/elevator speech – keep it short, keep it simple (1 sentence or less) and Practice, Practice, Practice

Be resourceful – provide your clients with the information they need to remain competitive (whenever they need information, guess who they'll call?)

Don't be Shy – ask for referrals and or references

Speak in your own voice – communicate what you do in a way that's comfortable for you

Be comfortable in your own skin – be yourself

Practice – Practice – communicating is an art, not a science

Communicating in a Virtual Environment

Traditional-Then

Using Technology-Now

Hand written correspondence	Word processing software
Snail mail	Email
Western Union Gram	Fax
Flying thousands of miles	Video conferencing
Telephone tag	Teleconferencing
Tape based answering machines	Digital voice mail
9-5	24/7/365 via a Website

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PARTICIPANT EXERCISE NO. 1: Write down 3 additional ways to communicate effectively with clients using technology.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Communicating in a Virtual Environment



Top 5 frequently used communication tools:

- Email
- Voice mail
- 2 Way Text Messaging
- Instant Messenger
- Telephone / Cell Phone

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PARTICIPANT EXERCISE: Write down 3 additional communication tools that you the VBO may use in your virtual business.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Communicating in a Virtual Environment

Communication Etiquette:



2 Way Text Messaging
Be Brief



Email
Stick to the Subject



Voice Mail
Speak Slowly

Sources: Library at Yale University
9/20/2002

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Communicating in a virtual environment can feel a little awkward at first, but the more you do it, the more comfortable you become. Honing your communication skills when working virtually takes time and lots of practice. Below are some examples of how to get your message across quickly, efficiently and most important professionally:

Email Etiquette - Send the Right Message

- Create single subject messages whenever possible
- Watch the send button. Assume that any message you send is permanent. Separate opinion from non-opinion
- Think about the level of formality you put in a message
- Identify yourself and your affiliations clearly
- Create separate [signature files](#) for business and personal use if necessary
- Target your audiences carefully when you broadcast information
- Never insult or criticize third parties without giving them the opportunity to respond
- When writing your message keep your intended audience in mind. Your intended audience will often influence your choice of language and style
- Keep the list of recipients and Cc's to a minimum (when appropriate use bcc to protect the privacy of your recipients)
- Stick to the subject of your message
- Be professional and polite

Communicating in a Virtual Environment

Communication Etiquette:



2 Way Text Messaging
Be Brief



Email
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Voice Mail
Speak Slowly

*Sources: Library at Yale University
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Voice mail Etiquette – leave messages of meaning

Our society is filled with busy people who live busy lives and maintain hectic schedules, voice mail is often times the closest you'll get to your client so it's important to leave messages of meaning and that are easy to return.

- Identify who you are – people are too busy to play guessing games
- Identify the company you're calling from – they may not remember you but may recall your company name
- Explain briefly in detail the reason for your call and what your needs are
- Leave your contact information – leave numbers where you can really be reached, otherwise, you risk playing phone tag and never receiving a return call
- SPEAK CLEARLY, SLOWLY and REPEAT IT AGAIN**
- If the option to review your message is given, listen to your message before sending it
- Be professional and polite

Communicating in a Virtual Environment

Communication Etiquette:



2 Way Text Messaging
Be Brief



Email
Stick to the Subject



Voice Mail
Speak Slowly

*Sources: Library at Yale University
9/20/2002*

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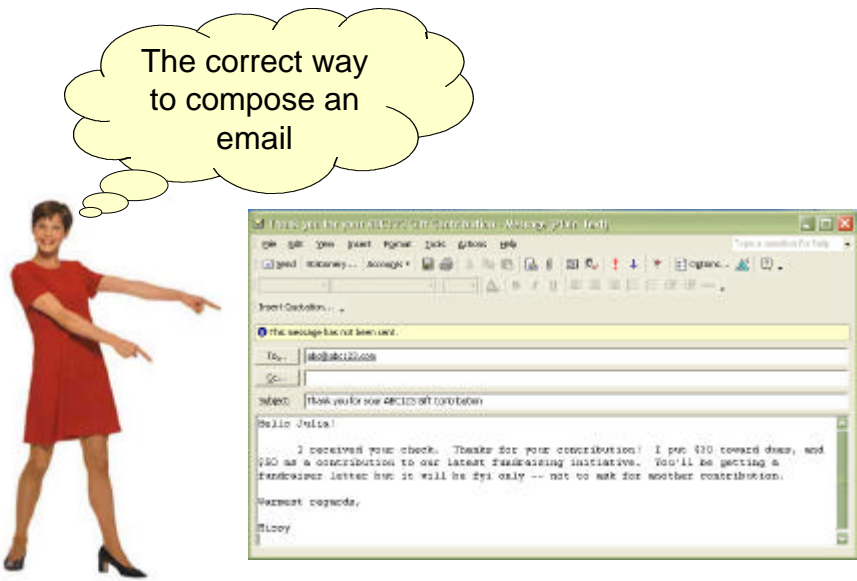
2-Way Text Messaging Etiquette – when your short message needs to get there yesterday

Mobile professionals on the go constantly find this way of communication very valuable when they need short answers quickly

- Confirm with your client that this method of communication is acceptable to him/her
- Keep messages short and very brief
- Stick to the point
- If your message is longer than 110 characters use email, voice mail or call the client
- Be professional and polite

Communicating in a Virtual Environment

The correct way to compose an email



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The correct way to compose a professional email message:

To:

Subject:

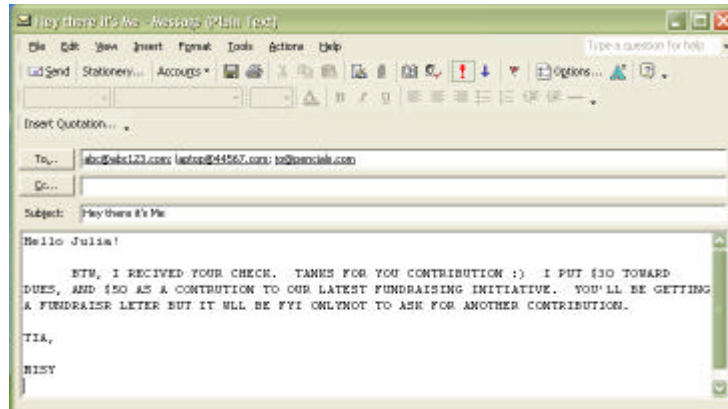
Body of Message

PARTICIPANT EXERCISE: Write down 5 additional steps that you should take before sending this email.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

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What's wrong with this email



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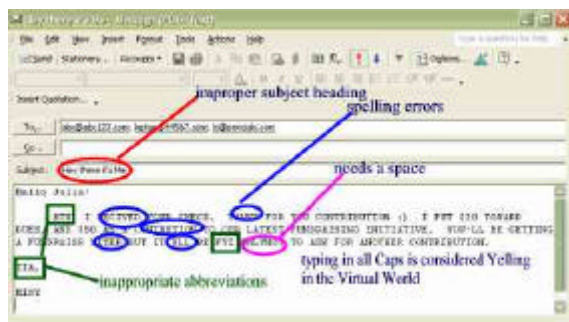
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PARTICIPANT EXERCISE: Write down 5 things wrong in this email message and explain why they are wrong:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

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Let's see if we're on the same sheet of Music



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P r i v a c y



Protecting your clients documents and information

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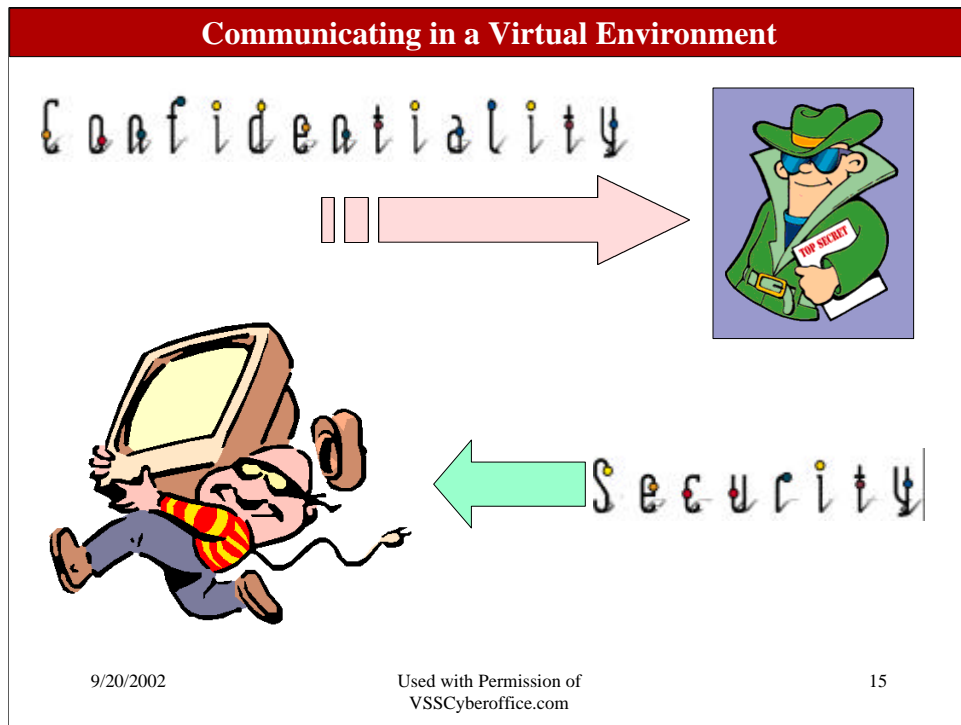
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Incorporating a privacy policy on your company website as well as in your information packet enables your virtual business to Build Trust, Attract and Retain Clients. While the industry at-large is taking a "**build it and they will come**" approach, seasoned Web savvy businesses understand that in order to attract and retain their clients, they **MUST** create an environment of trust.

In today's competitive market place developing open lines of communication, trust, and emphasizing long-term collaborative partnerships are key to retaining your clients. During the various collaboration stages with your client there will be lots of information shared, it's critically important that your client feels their information is in good hands. Developing your privacy policy and sharing it with your clients early on will help to build and add depth to your client/partner relationship.

To learn more on creating a privacy policy for your virtual business, see the attached sample **privacy.pdf** document. You can also visit **www.truste.org**.



Depending on the complexity of the projects you undertake some clients may request or require you to sign the following forms:

- Non Disclosure Agreement
- Confidentiality Agreement
- Independent Contractor Agreement
- Subcontractor Agreement

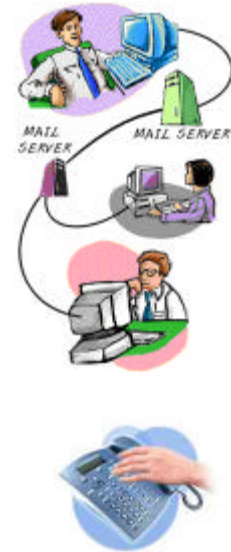
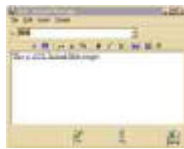
Before signing any type of binding agreement be sure to have it reviewed by an attorney. Below are examples of confidentiality statements and a security statement that you can use as a guide in developing your own.

Sample Confidentiality Statements:

- ABC company treats all inquiries and working relationships in strict confidence. No information will be disclosed without written consent of the client.
- ABC, Inc., is strongly committed to protecting the privacy of its clients. All client files and information are considered strictly confidential. Only those individuals who have a legitimate reason to have access to a file are permitted to do so. ABC has always maintained this standard and has never had an issue

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**Which
Communication
Solution is best
for my Virtual
Business?**



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Finding the right communication tools for your virtual business will vary and may change as your virtual business grows. What is important is that you take time to research, evaluate, and test the available tools and solutions on the market today. As your virtual business begins to grow you'll also notice that your communication methods with clients will vary as well.

The influx of virtual workers, telecommuters, and the mobile workforce industry at large has companies everywhere racing to develop solutions that will keep us all productive and at the fore front of today's ever changing technology.

Communicating in a Virtual Environment

Recommended Technologies for Your Virtual Biz



- **Email Address** (Main / Backup)
- **Website** (domain recommended)
- **Direct Business Line / Telephone**



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Email Address: In today's digitally connected business world much of your communication will be conducted via email. We recommend that you have at the minimum two email accounts, the first serving as your primary and the second serving as your backup, preferably web-based accessible (e.g., Hotmail or Yahoo).

Website: A website is more than just pages with cool graphics. Your site should provide answers to the following: Who, What, When, Where, and How? Ultimately, your site should be easy to locate in the search engines, communicate a professional image, provide easy navigation, offer services and or products of interest to the general public or more specifically, your target market.

Direct Business Line / Telephone: When clients call your virtual office what are they hearing? Your telephone service should communicate professionalism at it's best. The telephone is one of the most widely used communication tools in businesses today. What your clients hear or don't hear on the other end could leave an unfavorable impression with your clients.

Communicating in a Virtual Environment

POP Quiz:



1. Name two frequently used communication tools.
2. Name two things to check for before sending an email to a client.
3. Name three communication techniques and explain why they are important when working virtually.
4. Why is it important to incorporate a privacy policy?
5. Name 2 types of forms clients may request or require you to sign.

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Take a moment to answer the pop quiz above: If you answered the majority correctly, you're off to a great start communicating in a virtual environment.

1a.

1b.

2a.

2b.

3a.

3b.

3c.

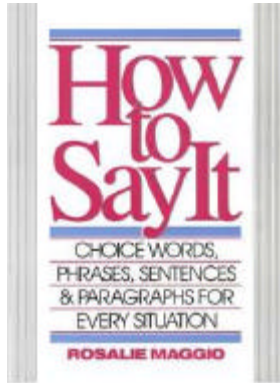
4.

5a.

5b.

Communicating in a Virtual Environment

Recommended Reading and Listening:



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Recommended Reading Material: Check your local library first, to see if they have these books on hand. If not, both are available either in your local bookstore or via the world wide web: **Barnes and Noble Bookstore:** <http://www.barnesandnoble.com/> || **Amazon:** <http://amazon.com>

How to Say It

Choice Words, Phrases, Sentences & Paragraphs For Every Situation

Author: Rosalie Maggio

Evolve

Succeeding in The Digital Culture of Tomorrow

Author: Rosabeth Moss Kanter

Recommended Listening

NPR's The Changing Face of America

Hear how this virtual marketing agency works virtually across six states

Source Link: <http://www.npr.org/ramfiles/me/20010330.me.05.rmm> (to hear you'll need the Real Media Player)

Source: www.npr.org

Communicating in a Virtual Environment

Seminar Review



- ☒ Top 10 Communication Techniques
- ☒ Communicating Then and Now
- ☒ Frequently used Communication Tools and their Purpose
- ☒ Communication Etiquette
- ☒ Construct Professional Email Messages
- ☒ Privacy
- ☒ Confidentiality and Security
- ☒ Choosing Communication Solutions for your Virtual Biz

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Let's review what we covered in today's seminar

*Thank You for being a part of
Communicating in a Virtual Environment*



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Have a question about the communicating in a virtual environment, join us in dialogue on the VBO message board where you can share your thoughts, experiences and/or comments.

Reminders

What to do next?

- Register for upcoming real time seminars
- Visit VBO Calendar for scheduled moderated chats
- Utilize the available resources in VBO (*see graphic on next slide*)
- Continue developing your business plan
- Begin working on a Promotional Campaign for Your VBiz
- Research the types of communication solutions for your VBiz
- Join us in dialogue on the **VBO Message Boards**
- Provide us with your feedback and comments

***Finally and as Always Share this WONDERFUL Resource with
Your Fellow Military Spouses***

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Join us on The VBO Message Board



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